

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 5534

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PEPR, LI, OAU

SUBJECT: U.S. ASSISTANCE TO GOL FOR 1979 OAU SUMMIT

REF: A. STATE 190320, B. MONROVIA 4976 C. MONROVIA 3312

1. REFTEL A INDICATES A DISCOURAGING LACK OF REALISTIC POSSIBILITIES FOR U.S. HELP TO THE 1979 OAU SUMMIT. THE ISSUES HERE ARE IMPORTANT POLITICAL ONES, AND I RECOMMEND A REVIEW OF MY DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM PROVIDED IN REFTEL B. I NOTED THEN THAT PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S TERM AS PRESIDENT OF THE OAU WILL PUT HIM IN A PARTICULARLY GOOD POSITION TO INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF OAU POLICIES. HAVING BEEN ASKED TO ASSIST THE GOL IN HOSTING THE CONFERENCE, WE WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE LITTLE REGARD FOR TOLBERT'S POTENTIAL TO HELP US IF WE SHOW OURSELVES SO UNRESPONSIVE TO THIS REQUEST. WE HAVE JUST SEEN EVIDENCE AGAIN BOTH AT KHARTOUM WITH THE OAU AND AT BELGRADE WITH THE NON-ALIGNED MEETING OF TOLBERT'S AND GOL'S EARNEST DEDICATION TO MODERATION IN FACE OF STEADY PRESSURE FROM THE RADICALS.

2. REFTEL A INDICATES WE MIGHT HAVE \$80,000 OF THE \$300, 000 NEEDED FOR THE INSTALLATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF NAVIGATIONAL AIDS AT ROBERTS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND SPRIGGS-PAYNE AIRFIELD, AND THIS ONLY AS A LOAN. THESE AIDS ARE DESCRIBED IN REFTEL C. THE DIFFERENCE OF \$220,000 WOULD REQUIRE
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CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION. IN THAT CASE, WHY NOT MAKE THE APPROACH TO CONGRESS? WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE A REASONABLY PERSUASIVE CASE FOR THIS TYPE OF STRATEGIC PROJECT NOTING INTER ALIA THE USE WHICH THE MILITARY AIRLIFT COMMAND MADE OF ROBERTS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT DURING RECENT U.S. HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS. THERE ARE ALSO SPECIFIC CONGRESSMEN WHOM WE CAN EXPECT TO BE SENSI-

TIVE TO PROJECTS SUPPORTING LIBERIA.

3. CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITIES MENTIONED IN PARA 3
REFTEL A, THE COMMENTS MADE MAKE IT CLEAR THAT NONE IS
A REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE. IS THERE NOT A POSSIBILITY
THAT, BY SHARING THE PROBLEM WITH CONGRESS AND SEEKING ITS
ADVICE ON HOW BEST TO MEET THIS REAL NEED, THOSE WHO
HOLD THE PURSE-STRINGS WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO A
SOLUTION?

4. WE UNDERSTAND THE PIPE-LINE (PORT OF MONROVIA TO
RIA) IS UNDER JOINT PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION BY STATE
AND DOD. THIS WOULD BE AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE.
WHILE THIS POSSIBILITY MIGHT REQUIRE MORE TIME THAN
REMAINS BEFORE NEXT YEAR'S OAU, IT WOULD STILL BE
ATTRACTIVE TO THIS COUNTRY AS AN INVESTMENT AIMED AT ITS
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT. IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY
WELCOME AS PART OF AN AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT SCHEME
INCORPORATING NAVIGATIONAL AIDS AND INCREASED
FUEL DELIVERY AND STORAGE CAPABILITY.

5. IN SUMMATION, I WISH TO REPEAT MY CONVICTION THAT OUR
POLITICAL STAKE IN HELPING LIBERIA WITH HOSTING OF THE
OAU SUMMIT IN 1979 IS SUCH THAT OUR HELP IN THE
FORM OF A MODEST \$300-500,000 EFFORT FOR AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT
SHOULD BE GIVEN PRIORITY ATTENTION.
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